

1479  
c. 1



ASSEMBLY, INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,

Assemblyman Samuel R. Geddes  
Chairman

SANTA BARBARA MEETING

October 26, 1959

*Report of hearing*

Present from the Committee: Chairman Samuel R. Geddes, Vice-Chairman John C. Williamson; James L. Holmes, Santa Barbara; Jack Schrade, San Diego; Senator John Hollister of Santa Barbara, Guest. Present and testifying, 18; registered, 30; audience, 50.

The hearing covered San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

The great importance of citriculture and the raising of other fruits, nuts and vegetables in these three counties sometimes obscures the importance of livestock on the ranges back of the coastal plains and above the river bottoms. It was these livestock interests and their great concern with AB 1996, which would outlaw the use of sodium fluoroacetate, ("compound 1080") in rodent control on the ranges which prompted most of the requests for the hearing in Santa Barbara.

However, labor continued the attendance at meetings which had begun in Salinas. Not surprisingly, the long-standing hard feelings that have existed between local farm workers and growers in the Ventura area, mostly centering around evictions from housing on the vast C. C. Teague ranches during a strike in the early '40's, erupted into angry exchanges in the part of the hearing nominally given over to a study of the problems of the family-size farm.

Testimony: Ranchers and growers Garrett Van Horne, Goleta; Dr. Madeline J. Algee, Creston; Ted Chamberlin, Los Olivos; Alfred Teuber, Santa Paula; Ulah E. Smith, Sr., Santa Maria; Frank Giorgi, Gaviota; William Laranjo, Buellton; Charles Sudden, Lompoc; Robert L. Pinkerton, Santa Paula; Edward Campodonico, Arroyo Grande; Ralph N. Harris, Santa Barbara Park Department; Agricultural Commissioner Harry E. Bronson of Ventura County; Agricultural Commissioner Walter S. Cummings of Santa Barbara and his deputy, Marcus E. Cravens, Carpinteria. Representing labor and the Mexican-American community: Rachel Guajardo, Eddie Perez and Romulo Campos of the United Packing House Workers of America; Jose D. Rivera of the Community Service Organization, all of Oxnard and A. T. Del Buono, CSO representative, Camarillo; R. E. Guthrie, Jr., Santa Barbara, private citizen.

AGRICULTURAL PEST CONTROL (AB's 1996 and 2513)

Madeline Algee, Doctor of Medicine, who has barley, wheat and cattle on 4,200 acres west of Paso Robles, testifying for herself and a number of large and medium-sized ranchers in San Luis Obispo County, affirmed that the only difficulty experienced with Compound 1080 in her area was the difficulty in getting the agricultural commissioner, who believes that applications every two or three years are better, to "cooperate" in yearly applications which she and the other ranchers believe necessary to keep down heavy infestations of ground squirrels, which once took "whole acres of grain".

Dr. Algee said that there have been occasional complaints from ranchers who did not tie up cats or dogs when the material was in use but said that there are ducks, geese and quail on her place and "to my very definite knowledge, I have never seen any that have been poisoned by 1080."

A resolution that she brought from the Crescent Farm Bureau said that "1080" is the only satisfactory poison we have ever used and is the only one practical for the large areas of our ranches

where "squirrels take a large toll of our grain and pasture grasses"; one from the Parkfield-Bradley Farm Center voiced their deep concern about the bill banning 1080 which, they believed, "is not detrimental to wild game"; a third from a group of some 20 of the larger ranchers on the Monterey-San Luis Obispo border said that 1080 "is far less dangerous to wildlife than phosphorous, which was in wide use before 1080 and has "the added danger of fire".

Garrett Van Horne, co-owner and operator of a 1,200-acre ranch, including 250 acres of lemons in the Gila Valley, said that there were doubtless other poisons whose use the State could authorize, but that:

"1080 is a very effective poison and ever since the county has used 1080 on our place we have noted a tremendous decline in the population of squirrels, and we haven't lost any dogs, and the coyotes have all gone someplace else, the jackrabbits don't seem to be as numerous as when the coyotes were there\*..... we have a Salk polio vaccine now for human beings, well, someday we'll have a better one (but let's stay with what we have that's good--1080--until we get something better) for the eradication of these rodents."

William Laranjo, who farms beans on 600 acres near Buellton and is President of the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau, commented that he had been informed that the genesis of the bill outlawing 1080 resided in the trail dog owners of Southern California, whose wide-ranging coondogs and foxhounds picked up rodents killed by 1080

\*The theory was elsewhere advanced that if coyotes were killed off, jackrabbits would multiply and become a pest in themselves. Wild-life managers note that the removal of a predator may operate to decrease the population of its prey. When the predator goes, the prey population increases until the food supply is too small and then, suffering from malnutrition, it becomes subject to disease and may be almost entirely wiped out. - Ed.

and were themselves poisoned, which would not be the case with household pets and farm dogs who could be tied up during the period of application and immediately afterward. He also noted that some ranchers had commented that their dogs had plenty to eat and did not touch dead rodents.

Laranjo said that county use of 1080 had decreased, since its first year of use, from 160 tons to 4,000 pounds or 98.75%, that it was cheap and potent and that its use was surrounded by strict safeguards, including warnings to ranchers who would then tie their dogs up. He noted that an increase in ground squirrels could increase the danger of plague, rabies and other endemic diseases, as well as being an expense to agriculture.

Robert L. Pinkerton, President of the Ventura County Farm Bureau, commended, in the name of his organization, the work of the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner in the 1080 program ".... a very important service to agriculture...effective and economical" and said that the Bureau had "....heard of no complaints in the methods and practices of distributing poison."

Edward Campodonico, President of the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, who raises cattle and grain on 2,000 acres, said that squirrels have been very effectively controlled by 1080. He noted that he had:

"...in the past, lost some pets, but I think that with proper control of our pets...during the times of poisoning we can eliminate that hazard, due to the fact that the vultures (who are apparently immune to 1080, according to the pesticide specialists. - Ed.) seem to clean up the range. They just follow right along and all the squirrels that die on top of the ground are very quickly taken care of."

Campodonico and his organization recommended a continuation of the close control of the poison by agricultural commissioners.

Ted Chamberlin, who has owned and operated an 8,000-acre ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley since 1929, said that:

"When I came...the squirrels would take a strip maybe 100 feet wide off all those grain fields and I would lose maybe 20 to 30 acres of grain to the squirrels. Today I don't think I lose 10 square feet."

He said that Santa Barbara County had pioneered in the use of 1080, that the work was all placed in the hands of the County and that control is now efficiently exercised with only two or three men for the whole county. (According to the Agricultural Commissioner, two full-time and four part-time men are assigned to the work. - Ed.) On the efficiency of 1080, he told how some squirrels had infested a pile of old posts near his ranch houses where:

"The man did not want to use 1080 because he thought it might get my dogs or something around there, and they tried other poisons (unsuccessfully for two years). This year I said, 'I'll lock the door, but you take 1080.' Within one week's time every squirrel disappeared."

Since squirrels have been eliminated, Chamberlin said that there is now a coyote problem. He believed that in earlier years of the use of the poison, coyotes were poisoned by dead squirrels.

Questioned on gophers, he said that wet years and a task force of 30 cats keep them down in the 30 acres of irrigated pasture around the house. While the cats are fed only a "little bit of milk" to keep their appetite for gophers sharp, he said that "as far as I know" he had never lost a cat or a dog with 1080 and that numerous quail in the area around the house do not seem to get up the 1080-treated grain, which is, however, put down gopher holes instead of being broadcast promiscuously.

Ulah E. Smith, Chairman of the Santa Barbara County Range Improvement Association (comprised of some of the largest ranches in Santa Barbara County together with numerous small ranches) read his group's endorsement of the use of the compound and said that while 1080 has been used by the county in and around his chicken pens, barn and corrals, he had never found any loss of game birds or small animals from it.

William F. Luton, Los Alamos rancher, in a letter submitted before he testified generally on cattlemen's problems, noted that"

"As a boy, I remember this and neighboring areas as being virtually alive with ground squirrels, which caused untold damage to crops, watersheds and roadways. Their holes and burrows have been the cause of many of the gullies and washes seen in our hills, and their consumption of feed significantly reduced the carrying capacity of our ranges.

The County Agricultural Department undertook control of these rodents by the use of poison grain around 1928. Since that time, an orderly supervised program of control has virtually eliminated them, and they are no longer a factor in our economy. Originally, strychnine was used in the bait; this was later supplanted by thallium, a more efficient but very vicious poison since it was cumulative in its effect. It did not kill quickly, thus allowing predators to catch and eat the rodents and in turn get poisoned. This cycle would go through several stages, until even magpies and buzzards, eating the carcasses, would be poisoned.

Thallium was supplanted in the mid-40's by Sodium Fluoroacetate, or Compound 1080, a highly-efficient and deadly poison, which has enabled our Agricultural Department to almost completely eradicate the ground squirrel.

Even though squirrels are now under control and are rarely found, constant vigilance must be maintained, as they multiply very rapidly and again may become an economic and health problem, as they are known, in many cases, to be carriers of the plague.

While all poisons are dangerous, I feel that continuing the use of Compound 1080, until something better and economically feasible is discovered, should not be forbidden. By law, it is handled only by trained department employees; and I personally know of no instance where its use has resulted in any death loss to dogs, game or livestock."

Frank Giorgi, who ranches on 4,000 acres (including 300 acres in grain and hay and 100 irrigated acres in alfalfa and beans) commented on the damage once done by great numbers of squirrels and other rodents, then said:

"Since 1080 has come into the picture I don't think my boy at home has seen more than two or three squirrels in his life on our own place, which gives an indication of the effectiveness of it. As far as dogs...cats and birds, I've never seen one poisoned from it yet. But, I have seen a lot of dogs that were poisoned in the early days from strychnine...I think we certainly need it. (There are) a few problems involving the sportsmen and some of those hunters, but I think it can be worked out very nicely...I make goodwill with the people in town by letting them come out and shoot the (jack) rabbits, so we get along very nicely."

Harry Bronson of Santa Paula, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner for Ventura County, testified briefly and entered a statement for Agricultural Commissioner C. J. Barrett which formalized the field covered generally by the ranchers. Commissioner Walter S. Cummings of Santa Barbara County did the same, stressing precautionary measures and the great reduction in the amount of bait spread. Cummings also noted that the program imposes no expense on the ranchers: any squirrel-infested area is deemed, by ordinance, a public nuisance and the ordinance further requires that the nuisance be abated at public expense.

Further statements in favor of the continued use of 1080 were submitted by Commissioner Thomas Chalmers of San Luis Obispo County, who warned of a danger to dogs unless they were kept well-fed and their movements restricted during the 48-hour period in which baiting is carried on (in Santa Barbara County, teams clean up dead rodents left on the surface after the use of the bait) and during which 90%

of exposed bait is consumed. He said that, prior to the start of any type of county baiting in 1928, 10% of crops were lost to squirrels.

Howard L. Iverson of the California Cattlemen's Association of San Luis Obispo County, said that birds, doves and quail do not eat the bait when it is used with rolled oats and that rodent-eating animals such as coyotes, are the only wildlife--other than squirrels--destroyed, and would become a pest themselves if 1080 were discontinued.

Herbert J. Reinert, for Jackson and Reinert, Paso Robles ranchers; Mr. J.L. Kessler of San Francisco, whose family has owned a 1,500-acre ranch near Creston since 1870; A.L. Sandall, Secretary-Manager of the Santa Barbara County Walnut Growers' Association; Elwin E. Mussell, Secretary of the Santa Barbara County Range Improvement Association; Charles E. Sudden, President of the Santa Barbara County Cattlemen's Association; Alfred Teuber, Superintendent of Pest Control for the Limoneira Company of Santa Paula, one of the largest citrus growers in the world; and A.C. Pedotti, Gaviota cattleman; all sent in statements.

Teuber's letter noted the danger of secondary poisoning of animals which eat poisoned rodents, but said that with continuing careful county supervision it can continue to be used with a "minimum of incident". Mr. Pedotti stated that his own hounds, strays and hunters' hounds have ranged in 1080-treated areas and that, "I have never had a case of poisoning among my own dogs, nor have I noticed one among stray and hunter dogs."

Opposition to 1080

In the audience was Robert E. Guthrie, a citizen of Santa Barbara. He said:

"I have no testimony. I came largely to satisfy my own curiosity in the use of this 1080 after reading this article in Best Articles and Stories Magazine of October this year. It's taken from Nature Magazine. They're violently opposed to the use of the poison. I had vaguely heard of it before and I wanted to find out what anybody had to say in favor of it....I'm beginning to get the impression that the proper course lies somewhere between banning it completely and apparently what they're doing now. Apparently not in all the counties, they're not as careful as they are here.... There's considerable material here to indicate that in some places they just throw this stuff to the winds for anything that wants to come along and eat it. There's considerable indication that valuable game animals and scavengers are also killed by it."

Chairman Geddes asked:

"Mr. Guthrie, are they just talking, generally speaking about using it throughout the United States, or ..."

Mr. Guthrie replied:

"No, they're primarily concerned with California. They also mentioned Eastern Montana where it has almost completely eradicated coyotes, and they are using more poison now than they ever were before. They used it on coyotes originally because of the sheep and now they are using more than they ever were before to try to keep the rabies down. In California, they quote so many figures on the use of the stuff that I couldn't begin to remember."

The article, whose inclusion in the record was also requested by the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society, was written by Mrs. Marguerite Angelo Smelser of San Bernardino. It may be summarized as follows:

Compound 1080 was developed during World War II during a shortage of another poison.

It is extremely deadly, and because of its great stability (resistance to change after being eaten and long-lasting qualities) it can result in "...an annihilative chain reaction destructive to all wildlife." \*It is poisonous to man as well as animals and at least 16 human beings have died from its effects as of 1950. No antidote is known.

"In the wake of (its) discovery have followed widespread tragedy to wildlife, and almost unbelievable official incompetency, complacency and concealment."

"Unfortunate that 1080 was ever discovered", writes a noted research biologist.

Predators such as the coyote, the bobcat and the golden eagle are endangered by the use of 1080. "There is little doubt that rodents killed by 1080 and later eaten by carnivores are responsible for the loss of many furbearers...", Robert L. Rudd and Richard E. Genelly, University of California Department of Zoology, who warn of the dangers of poison bait in mammal control generally.

These predators, while often held to be a menace to livestock by those who profit by their extermination at so much per pelt, are actually overwhelmingly beneficial, feeding mostly on rodents.

"Widely spaced 1080-injected carcasses are deadly baits to the far-ranging brush wolf (coyotes) and its extirpation in large regions is now but a matter of time,"-- Dr. Durward Allen, "Our Wildlife Legacy," written when he was a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist.

"Carefully collecting and burning all surface kill that can be located, still has not prevented accidental poisoning...residue or uneaten baits constitute a hazard to beneficial wildlife in the same habitat"-- Tull Company (Manufacturers of 1080) Bulletin No. 1.

\*Compound 1080....is as poisonous for all kinds of animals as any other material used. Wherever it is used there is great danger that dogs and cats may eat rodents killed by 1080 and be poisoned. This material therefore, should be employed only by properly trained persons and in certain kinds of places...There is no certain antidote...." Storer, Tracy L., Professor and Zoologist Emeritus, University of California, Davis: "Controlling Field Rodents in California", California Agricultural Experiment Station, Extension Service, Circular 434 (revised) University of California, Division of Agricultural Sciences; October 1958. - Ed.

This would indicate that those who oppose use of 1080 are not "misinformed", fanatics", as charged by officials in government agencies or "a few faddists", the term used by the National Agricultural Chemical Association.

Statements denying that there is widespread indiscriminate slaughter by 1080, that it is selective, killing only coyotes and rodents, and that it is used only with "extreme caution" by "experts" are "serious falsehoods". Ample documentation is available as to the harm it does, although many informants, to keep their jobs, must remain anonymous.

Once 1080 bait is out of the poisoner's hands, no safeguards are possible. "Pieces of solid bait may be carried by rats and mice into stored food...", she quotes the U.S. Public Health Service as saying.

Investigations of the effects of 1080 are usually made by those who have an interest in its continued use. For instance, that the compound is still being manufactured was denied by the Agricultural Commissioner of San Bernardino County, "a copious spreader of 1080", although the Tull Chemical Company of Mississippi, claiming to be its sole manufacturer, now says it has sales agents in 23 countries.

#### Wildlife Service Fish and Game

When trapper Lester Reed sent a pamphlet describing the indiscriminate destructiveness of the 1080-control program to Senator Thomas Kuchel, the Director of Sport Fisheries of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, (which is principally interested in destroying 'predators') wrote Kuchel that, "Reed was not fully informed regarding the use of 1080... He grossly overestimates the danger to humans...all the chemicals used in the entire State of California would only be sufficient to pollute a small tank of water at a concentration sufficient to endanger humans." Taking the manufacturer's own toxicity standards and the Fish and Wildlife Service's own minimum concentrations, Mrs. Smelser figures that enough water solution to kill 1,378,022 Californians would have resulted instead.

In 1955, 135 deer were found dead in 1080-baited areas. Although outside veterinarians, before the two Departments acted, found evidence of 1080 poisoning, the Departments of Agriculture and Fish and Game of the State of California conducted experiments which indicated that the deer may have been poisoned by milkweed. The experiments were described by Mrs. Smelser as (1) imprisoned deer would not eat milkweed; (2) one was starved for 90 hours until it did so, then died; (3) dried milkweed leaves were injected into the fourth stomach of another, which also died; (4) deer injected with 1080 died.

In 1958, 3,000 geese were killed in the Tule Lake area by poison grain. The Fish and Game Department reported that it had "headed off a major public reaction" by corrective action, which consisted in telling hunters to report any cases of suspected poisoning to the Fish and Game division or the nearest agricultural agency.

In one area, a California legislator, himself an orchardist, said that 1080 could be purchased by any farmer, that half the orchardists in his area had it in their backyards to poison rodents or rabbits. Mrs. Smelser states she has official letters from the legislator's County Agricultural Commissioner saying that he does not supply the bait to individuals!

Three pamphlets on the beneficial effects of 1080 on furbearing animals other than coyotes were supplied Mrs. Smelser by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They were described as "factual and impartial". One bulletin was "published in the interest of the sheep industry by (?) "partner in the Idaho Chemical Industries"; a second is a reprint from the National Wool Grower; a third from The American Cattle Producer". "Each pamphlet praised 1080, lauded the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, belabored the coyote, and denounced the groups being organized to protest the use of chain-acting compound 1080". The Service told Mrs. Smelser that they had no funds to print material on the "recognized" value of carnivores.

Reports that animals other than coyote are not killed by 1080 may be due to an alleged widespread practice of directing trappers and poisoners to list only predators killed and to hide carcasses of other animals to avoid unfavorable public reaction.

Other evidence is presented along the same general lines.

Mrs. Smelser states: "No one will deny that the farmer needs control of rodents, and, at times, the elimination of individual carnivores. But for rodents, there are safer poisons with which to achieve results; for carnivores, there is the more biologically sound-trapper-instructor-farmer system used successfully in Missouri."

Mrs. Smelser herself, in a letter to the committee, expressing her regret at not being able to be present at the Santa Barbara hearing, said, in commenting on a committee press release which

stated that farmers had shown interest in the bill on 1080.

"Yes, indeed, the farmers (not all of them, by a long shot!) and the wool growers, aided and abetted by the chemical poison manufacturers and oil companies will raise a great hue and cry if they think their immediate profits might be cut down in the least--even though such might not be the case. There are far less dangerous poisons than 1080 that are effective in controlling rodents. I was born and reared on a California ranch; I can sympathize with a farmer's problems. My father made a small fortune in crops and cattle--without insecticides and without 1080. He adhered to good land management, and he would have driven a poison 'expert' off his premises. He would have resented the idea of saddling the taxpayers with his own responsibility of eliminating the few individual so-called predators which infrequently did damage. He was intelligent; he realized that 'predators' in general are a farmer's insurance against undue amounts of rodents and rabbits."

She noted that she had received hundreds of letters on the article:

"For the most part these letters were written by thoughtful laymen; a good number have come from biologists, zoologists, entomologists, trappers--and a few from poisoners. The professionals confess guardedly that because they are in sensitive positions they follow the easy pathway of conforming to what is expected of them from the men at the top. Yet they hope that sooner or later an explosion will come from the people.

"You must certainly be cognizant of the very many articles exposing the poisoned foods we buy and the wildlife we are losing --articles in Red Book, Readers' Digest, American Mercury, Organic Gardening, Audubon Magazine, The Nation, Outdoor America, Nature Magazine, etc., including--of all things! the Police Gazette.

"A fully informed public will eventually make it hot for those in power who have been lulled by the noisy few guarding the poison pots.

"What but public alarm brought the Congressional approval of \$2,565,000 annually for research into the effects of insecticides and pesticides? What but public alarm brought the proposal to prohibit "progressive poisons", and placing a tax on the pesticide products to defray costs of research? (The Trappers' Association have a good idea there: let the taxpayers off the hook and tax the guys who make the profits on their products!) One mid-west research biologist with a national reputation tells me that already enough has come to light to infuriate the people as never before--when the facts become known. When it does, there will be a lot of scurrying to cover.

"And yet, burying heads in the sand, the National Agricultural Chemical Association not long ago dubbed the hundreds of thousands of people aroused over the widespread use of dangerous pesticides on food and in the soil as "a few food faddists"! And the Director of the California Department of Agriculture has the gall to write that there is "...opposition by a small group against the use of certain field rodenticides.

"Our problem in the USA is not underproduction--a nine billion dollar farm crops surplus with more than a million dollars a day for storage!--but our problem is how to get good, uncontaminated foods for our children and for ourselves, and how to protect the remnants of our wildlife. As of now, we can no longer trust our milk, our vegetables, our fruits, or the very air we breathe. And most of us know that 'predator control' is a racket."

She scouted the idea expressed by others at previous hearings that birds will not eat colored grain: (Bakersfield- Ed.)

"Before me as I type, is a news item, Bakersfield dateline clipped from the Fresno Bee (10-1-59). The caption reads: "Ranchers Back Compound 1080 in Gopher Fight". The news item is full of misrepresentation and misinformation. For instance: "There have been no accidents with Compound 1080." Utterly false. Again: "Sodium fluoroacetate-treated grain is yellow and birds will not pick up any grain not a natural color." Hokum of the worst sort--and now admitted to be false by even those 'authorities' who for a time claimed that birds would not eat colored grain. Records show that in California, Oregon and Washington, ducks, geese, pheasants, (and untold numbers of mammals) were poisoned by the thousands WITH COLORED GRAIN. More than 2,500 dead geese and ducks were picked up in one day near Tulelake Refuge. Laboratory tests showed that all were poisoned by colored grain injected with compound 1080; some with colored grain injected with zinc phosphide. Put out by 'experts'? 'Restricted'?

"My husband (a naturalist) and I conducted a controlled experiment with grain colored with dyes--colored the shade which the county government 'experts' were using, and which the supervisors assured us the birds would not eat. All the species of game birds and song birds that come to our feeding trays ate the colored grain, seeming to prefer the natural grains, but nonetheless eating the colored. But the newspapers fall for the birds-won't-eat-colored-grain baloney. As also, quite likely, do the legislators. Have the legislators put out any such scientific data in their press releases, data showing that the colored-grain contention is unscientific?"

Attached to Mrs. Smelser's letter were the following:

"Insecticide Uptake by Crops May be Dangerous," California Farmer, September 12, 1959.

"Poisoners at Work," letter to the Editor of the Hemet News, October 13, 1959 by Lester Reed of San Jacinto, dated October 6, 1959.

"Pesticides Poison Us", by William F. Longgood, The American Mercury, July 1958.

VERTICAL INTEGRATION (ACR 60)

Garrett Van Horne pointed out the advantages of grower-sponsored vertical integration through producers' co-operatives, (using Sunkist citrus as an example) which return to the grower a profit on all levels of the operation that would ordinarily go to other people.

Van Horne said that he felt that growers dissatisfied with volume voting\*, might change their co-operative back to the one member, one vote basis by changing their by-laws, but admitted that he did not know whether this would be a practical possibility or not.

Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner Walter Cummings said that his county has not had the problems faced by other areas of the State from (non-farmer financed--Ed.) vertical integration, which he defines as "...one control of...commodities from...production to marketing". He cited the danger of farmers losing their independence by credit being in the hands of the integrators, rather than being secured from a bank or other source.

\*

A frequently-made charge is that some large co-operatives contribute to the spread of vertically-integrated operations by financing large operations to the detriment of the majority of their members, who are small or medium-sized. They are able to do this, critics say, because of a system where the amount of tonnage processed or some such measure replaces the classic "one member, one vote" co-operative. See discussion in San Jose hearings by Larry Thompson, Manager of the Poultry Producers of Central California. - Ed.

FAMILY-SIZE FARM PROBLEMS (ACR 365)

H.R.

The soil-bank program was criticized by Dr. Madeline Algee who said that neighboring acreage which lies fallow under the soil bank produces mustard and tumbleweed (Russian Thistle), seed from which blows down into the part of her 4,000 acres\* which is in barley and wheat. The Agricultural Commissioner, she said, is not allowed to control these weeds on the 'banked' acreage. She felt that the 'banks' did not improve the land, but only the state of the grower's finances.

Dr. Algee also talked of the anaplasmosis problem among her cattle and the exacting requirements made by the Federal Government to run tests on the animals--signing over control of the herd, hiring veterinary care at her own expense, etc., after the problem has been declared a research project by the Beltsville, Maryland, agricultural experiment station--which she had rejected.

Brucellosis Control

She criticized the State's brucellosis control program as a make-work project for "the State veterinary department".

"...we all want our cattle protected from brucellosis....(but) in our area what happens? (No) program until after June 1961, because there's no more money to test our cattle, but there's lots of money to hold hearings... With seven State employees down in San Luis Obispo for the hearings, that doesn't do us any good whatsoever. Just to window dress so that they will ask them to come into our county, which we don't want, to give us 50¢....tests (free) which we'd be awfully happy to pay for ourselves, but which we can't pay for."

\*

In the dry-farming area of San Luis Obispo County a "family farm" may be several thousands of acres--10 acres to a cow, etc.-Ed.

Bill Luton, Los Alamos cattle rancher, confessed that he was puzzled as to why "the rules had been changed" on the brucellosis eradication campaign, pointing out that now bulls had to be vaccinated as well, although he believed they were not carriers. He talked of the anaplasmosis problem, saying that cattle in the area had learned to live with it "like the Frenchmen lives with typhoid fever". Only the eradication of deer, who are the carriers of the disease, would eradicate it, and this, he implies, would be too high a price to pay.

Frank Giorgi, Gaviota cattleman, claimed that anaplasmosis was the worst cattle problem and said that ranchers had for several years been trying to get the state to do more research on it. He felt that by now, the State should be able to control brucellosis by vaccination, instead of test and slaughter.

#### Farm Prices

William Laranjo of Buellton, President of the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau, commented that:

".....It seems to me, just looking around, that all agricultural commodities are beginning to slip a little bit and I don't know exactly why, but the lemon people, the cattle people, the hog people, the bean people, all of them are beginning to slip a little bit. My personal feeling is that there is just too much of these. I don't know."

Laranjo was asked about the possibility of grower 'self-help' marketing agreements to send crops to market in an orderly manner so that prices would not be broken:

"I personally don't think that too many controls is too good. I know that if you don't control this production you are going to have a declining price, but we in agriculture are...freedom-loving people and when they start telling us how many acres we can plant of this and how many acres we can harvest of that, why we get a little bit

perturbed....(but) we understand that there has to be some way of controlling it. Now if we could do that ourselves we would be very happy, but I don't know whether we can or not."

Questioned as to whether the law of supply and demand might not level things off if all controls were eliminated, Laranjo replied:

"Well, I don't know...I sit at the State Farm Bureau Convention and I hear those fellows all talking about doing away with support prices, and then there's the other segment that thinks that prices are going to go clear to the bottom if we do away with them\*. But most of these people that talk about doing away with support prices will go home and apply for (them)."

\*US News and World Report, December 14, 1959, published a study by the highly-regarded Iowa State University (Ames) agricultural economics department on 1962-63 prices if controls were taken off now:

	<u>1959-60</u>	<u>1962-63</u>
Corn, Bu.	1.06	.66
Wheat, Bu.	1.71	.74
Beef cattle, Cwt.	21.60	11.51
Hogs, Cwt.	13.42	10.80
Lambs, Cwt.	18.62	15.13
Milk, Cwt.	3.91	2.66
Broilers, Lb.	1.67	.13
Cotton, Lb.	.315	.21
Turkeys, Lb.	.221	.165
Eggs, Doz.	.327	.272

Consumer prices would not, of course, reflect the sharpness of these drops, except in eggs, broilers and turkeys. One famous analysis of farm prices versus consumer prices showed that if farmers gave their products away, the consumer would hardly notice it. Bread, for instance, would be only 2 or 3¢ a loaf cheaper.-Ed.

Lemon Problems

Garrett Van Horne, who has 250 acres of lemons in the 600 acres of his ranch devoted to crops, told of the current plight of the lemon growers, who are overproducing because of over-expansion in a period of good prices a few years back, when it appeared that processed lemons would be an addition to fresh lemons, instead of a substitute for them. (lemon production, a few years ago, was about 28,000 cars with 21 to 22,000 sold fresh; it is now 35 to 40,000 cars with a fresh market of only 15,000).

He stated that the average size grove was, until recently, 15 to 20 acres, which produced a reasonable living, including retiring the investment, "up until a year or so ago".

The growers, he said, are now seeking inclusion of "lemons for processing" under the Agricultural Marketing Act, and import restrictions on a processing lemons from Italy.

160-Acre Limitation

Under questioning, citrus grower Garrett Van Horne said that the Santa Barbara area was one where small acreages--15 to 30 acres--were diversified in lemons and avacados and often tomatoes, but that any acreage limitation would have to take account of the type of crops grown".....it is just impossible to maintain a cattle operation or any of the grain farming operations that were recited by the previous speaker (Dr. Algee) with only 160 acres allowed for irrigation.\*

\*The grain farms under discussion at this hearing were dry farms and the cattle were on ranches; the average irrigated pasture on 308 farms reporting irrigated pasture in San Luis Obispo County in 1954 was 23 acres; on Santa Barbara's 143, 50 acres; on Ventura's 71, 28 acres. Total acreage pastured in the three counties was 1,007, 855 acres per 1,021 farms; total irrigated pasture was 16,467. - Ed.

Van Horne said that he felt that it was "more realistic" to have some limitation on acreage because it had been impossible, "so far, under two administrations, to remove the 160-acres limitation entirely", but that he felt there should be no limitation in any new state legislation.

Senator Hollister said that he felt that, if there were an acreage limitation, the smaller farmers would not be able to afford the water "...the minimum farm unit where the fellow is just able to get by...." and that "...they (would) have to pay for it in the urban areas. Now....big enough properties where somebody can really get out and make some money and they can be assured of it, they'll put (in) the installation and the pipelining and all the rest of it, and maybe we'll get a little bit out of agriculture for the water, now that's my philosophy".

William Laranjo who, with his family, farms 600 acres and runs 200 head of cattle, commented that the increase in cost of equipment was an argument against the 160-acre limitation, pointing out that the price of a \$3,000 tractor had quadrupled in the last ten years\* (while farm prices - Ed.) "...and you have to get more acreage or you can't come out on the deal."

\*See Bakersfield hearings for discussion on farm machinery needs and prices, variously estimated at from \$3,000 (secondhand) to \$30,000 for a family-size farm. - Ed.

JAN 6 1960

Page 21

### The Labor Problem

Garrett Van Horne in response to a question about the competition growers in the area faced from other States, stated that he felt that Santa Barbara growers could not operate unless other States had a minimum wage similar to that proposed for California: "I feel that it would be very injurious to California agriculture to have a minimum wage, \$1.25 per hour."

Reminded that the proposal at the last Legislature was for 90¢ an hour, Van Horne stated that the minimum on his ranch was \$1.00 an hour but that he was opposed to a California-only minimum, whatever it was, on principle.

Senator Hollister said that he was opposed to a minimum wage just for California, but favored one for the nation as a whole, which would "...probably...be a good thing and a good thing for everybody, but I don't want to see the State of California (holding) an umbrella ...over every other State in the Union even if there was a 25-cent minimum wage....people will migrate to areas where they think they are going to get a bigger wage...even a small minimum wage, so I think (we would) end up by paying a lot of taxes (for off-season relief costs), that labor in this area will be damaged by it having a lot of competition against the unions. You know that when you get a lot of people coming in competing for the hourly wage...why pretty soon all wages go down. I think labor would make a big mistake by even going after this minimum wage."

William Laranjo, said that he did not feel a minimum wage should be "legislated".

"....if we can get \$5.00 an hour, fine, if things drop off and you can get two bits an hour like I worked for for many an hour, well that's all right too. That's the way I look at it. I know there's a lot of people that don't agree with me on that point."

Labor Representatives

Antonio T. Del Buono, representing the Oxnard Chapter of the Community Service Organization, which claims a dues-paying membership of 1,200 since its formation a year ago, requested a "full-scale investigation" of conditions in the Ventura County labor camps. Informed that the Committee's jurisdiction did not include labor problems except as they affected the general problems of the family farmer, he elected to discuss the bracero program.

He said that 80% of his organization's members are employed in agriculture and the bracero program, which had brought Mexican and even Japanese workers into the neighborhood, had created a situation which, by depressing wages, and all but eliminating the employment of ".....local residents, people that have resided in Ventura County for many, many years, some of them second generation", had added to the County relief load.

He said that the representatives of the Growers Farm Labor Association "...harrassed (local workers) in every way and manner possible. They wouldn't take them out to jobs even after the CSO had followed the Employment Service's instructions of first registering the workers at the Ventura office and then taking them out

to the Association camps for dispatch to the job.

"These monkeys that operate these camps...don't like that because...the local worker knows his rights, knows how to defend himself, (which the inarticulate bracero does not know how to do). If he (the bracero) squawks, they put him on a truck to El Centro and back into Mexico. (Experienced braceros) say, "Look, don't get into any trouble, don't participate in anything. If you can't stand it, ask to be sent to Mexico."

When it was pointed out that, because of the number of industrial jobs available, there were real labor shortages in agriculture which were met by braceros, Del Buono said,

"...in areas where the domestic supply of labor is not sufficient, I'm for them bringing in Nationals from every country to help save the crops. We don't want the farmers to lose, but (in one Ventura County camp alone) after the peak of the (tomato)...harvest--they have 4,000 workers...Nationals, and yet the locals, the residents who pay taxes and spend their money here, could not get a job...They want all these workers possible to be working so they can collect that \$1.75 (per day for room and board)."

Del Buono criticized the lack of toilets in the fields and the methods of transporting farm workers, charging that:

"We take better care of our cattle..a good careful truck driver stops every once in a while and checks to see if there's a cow down ...but Mexican Nationals are locked up and they burn to death...human life is very cheap."

He charged that pleas to the Ventura police chief to do something about unlicensed truck drivers (15 at one camp) merely brought warnings to them to get their licenses.

Speaking through an interpreter, Mr. Romulo Campos, resident Mexican field worker who has been in the area since 1910 said:

"I'm from Oxnard and I'm a field worker. I've been working many, many years collecting the farm products. We work very hard. The field workers put on by the farmer are always chasing after us. They always tell us if we don't like it they always can get some National workers. We have the necessity to work, we have our bills

to pay, like rent, food, housing, taxes, and all that kind of thing that goes with it. I have seen many men that have to get their kids out of school in order to be able to fully provide for the family. In that region of Oxnard there's been a long, long time since we've been making from 85 to 90 cents an hour. I don't know why there is such a big difference in salary that all of us that work in the field have to depend too many times on the...on getting things from the store on credit and have bills all over the place without having enough to pay for them. I don't know why we always have to be at the lowest end of the salaries. Just last year, I lost about four months work just because there were too many Nationals taking over our jobs."

Interpreter Jose De Rivera said, on his own, that the problem Mr. Campos was attempting to put forth was that:

"We have more Mexican Nationals than we should have."

He estimated that a resident should be employed fairly steadily the year around in a crop cycle which includes "just about everything the State can produce", which would bring him in earnings of over \$2,000 a year, instead of the average of \$1,000 to \$1,200 the average worker, described as a family head, with children, was now making, because of the competition from braceros.

He answered the charge that local labor would not do the type of work the braceros do, with,

"The problem here lies where a man has to endure certain things, or he hasn't. You can't expect a local worker to slave just because others do. This is not a problem whether a man is doing a good day's work for a good day's pay. This is a thing where a man has to do way more than he has to for the little money he's getting. He's being way, way underpaid. He's not willing to do more than he's getting paid for. Just like you and I."

De Rivera, discussing the determination of the need for Nationals said that:

"...the growers themselves get together and they assign the number they want brought into the county without asking anybody whether he's out of work or not."

William Laranjo, said that he did not feel a minimum wage should be "legislated"

"....if we can get \$5.00 an hour, fine. If things drop off and you can get two bits an hour like I worked for for many an hour, well that's all right too. That's the way I look at it. I know there's a lot of people that don't agree with me on that point."

Labor Representatives

Antonio T. Del Buono, representing the Oxnard Chapter of the Community Service Organization, which claims a dues-paying membership of 1,200 since its formation a year ago, requested a "full-scale investigation" of conditions in the Ventura County labor camps. Informed that the Committee's jurisdiction did not include labor problems except as they affected the general problems of the family farmer, he elected to discuss the bracero program.

He said that 80% of his organization's members are employed in agriculture and the bracero program, which had brought Mexican and even Japanese workers into the neighborhood, had created a situation which, by depressing wages, and all but eliminating the employment of ".....local residents, people that have resided in Ventura County for many, many years, some of them second generation", had added to the county relief load.

He said that the representatives of the Growers Farm Labor Association "...harassed (local workers) in every way and manner possible. They wouldn't take them out to jobs even after the CSO had followed the Employment Service's instructions of first registering the workers at the Ventura office and then taking them out

He charged that the prevailing wage is set in much the same unilateral way. He implied that local workers often refuse to work for an 80-cent scale and a shortage of workers is then certified to the State Department of Employment by the growers.

Campos testified that "emergencies" requiring braceros are sometimes not genuine, citing a pimento crop in which picking could have been completed by locals without spoilage.

De Rivera said that braceros should be brought in as needed, but "not to overdo it".

#### Bracero Competition

Miss Rachel Guajardo, representative of the United Packing House Workers of America told of the difficulty local labor has in getting any work at all when braceros are in the area, citing Imperial County, where a group of 200 locals "just sat" in the Employment Department Office at El Centro in an effort to be assigned to jobs.

Many of the jobs they sought, Miss Guajardo said were year-round feed-lot jobs in the cattle-feeding industry in the Valley "...90% (of which were held by) Nationals (at) 70-cents an hour".

After many protests, USDE officials from San Francisco went down to the Imperial Valley in April and removed braceros, with the result that domestic workers are now employed on the jobs at \$1.00 an hour, she said.

She stated that difficulties in securing employment for domestic workers were great in Ventura County, with camp directors constantly subjecting the locals to "harassment". She cited the largest camp's director, and not the growers, as the moving spirit in the campaign

to replace locals with braceros in Ventura County. As an example of harassment, she cited the refusal of the director to pay an hourly wage in strawberries to local women even though braceros receiving an hourly wage were working alongside them.

She said that there was great overcrowding at this camp and that bad conditions existed at camps elsewhere, which were probably cleaned up for visits of other committees. (This was hotly disputed by Assemblymen who had investigated.-Ed.).

Wage Rates

Citing low wages, she stated that long-experienced workers in Imperial Valley carrot-topping could earn only 42 to 45-cents on piece rates, that in Oxnard, Ventura County, the same job brought but 43-cents an hour, and that women strawberry pickers in Ventura were earning 60 to 65-cents on piece rates while braceros were getting an hourly wage of 85-cents. In Ventura lemons, she mentioned that sizable high school boys, who could handle the lemon sacks in what she described as the heavy, skilled work involved in picking, had very low earnings: she cited one boy who averaged 48-1/2-cents an hour over 87 hours in a two-week period.

She then cited an experienced picker, a local Mexican-American worker who averaged about \$7.50 a day for picking lemons.

(The committee investigator queried grower representatives who said that this would appear to be a good average picker, but that conditions of picking varied so much (some days lemons are picked for size, color, etc.; some groves have tall trees, others short; etc.) that no conclusions could be drawn. Mr. H. H. Miller of the Growers' Farm Labor Association for the citrus industry is preparing for the committee a table of representative earnings in the area.-Ed.).

Labor Contracting of Braceros

Miss Guajardo charged that it was illegal for California labor contractors to contract braceros for work, that their licenses covered only contracting of local workers. But, she said, these contractors were treating braceros as a normal part of the labor force instead of workers for emergencies arising in specific areas, to be handled only by the Growers' Farm Labor Association which brought them in from Mexico, under government agreements, to work for its members.

She said that labor contractors in Ventura, Stockton, Tracy, Patterson, and the towns in the lower San Joaquin area, no longer try to get workers from the Imperial Valley, or from Arizona or Texas. This has resulted she said, in an oversupply of braceros, who are working only three or four days a week in the Tracy area and around Ventura at the present time.

She said that the situation was improving in areas where the union was at work carrying complaints to the Department of Employment, but that it remained the same in areas where there was no such activity. She recommended greater enforcement powers for local Employment Department Offices.

In closing, Miss Guajardo said that wages have remained static for workers like Mr. Campos in this area at around 85-cents for some fourteen years, while living costs have gone up.

She was asked to submit more generalized information on labor problems in the area and to relate these specifically to problems of the family-size farm, which she promised to do.

Agricultural Commissioner Walter Cummings said that there appeared to be no serious labor difficulties in Santa Barbara County, (i.e., as opposed to Ventura-Ed.), but that "...when you have two groups of labor you always have a problem...".

#### Grower Urges Investigation

William Laranjo of Buellton, President of the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau, said that the contracting practices alleged by Miss Guajardo do not go on in Santa Barbara County and urged that the Ventura County Farm Bureau make an investigation of the situation there. In Santa Barbara County, he said that growers go through the Placement Service Office to use domestic labor wherever they can.

#### Ventura Grower Replies

Obviously deeply moved, R. L. Pinkerton, President of the Ventura County Farm Bureau, came forward and declared:

"...we would welcome any investigation into the labor situation ... (and into) any of those labor camps... (Ventura County is) one of the richest agricultural areas in the world. We treat our help better than any place in the world. We're proud of it. On our particular ranch we use domestic labor that has been working for us as much as 20 years. Occasionally we need National labor. We use them only when we have to... (and can only) use them if we get certification from the Department of Labor. We can't do down to the camp and say, "We want two men... three men, we've got to have four men". It's impossible.

We have to go through the State Department of Labor (sic) down there in Ventura...to get an authorization, get clearance. We have first to make application for domestic labor. We pay the men--this price of 45-cents and 40-cents that has been bantered around here---we pay our men a minimum of \$1.00 an hour...(or, if Nationals are used) a dollar an hour plus...I think it's a 12-1/2% carrying charge--to cover insurance, books, etc., and everything they do. It costs us more... than...domestic labor...I think we can work out these problems locally if there are honest complaints...It doesn't have to go, necessarily, through state agencies. We would like to know it because we want to treat our people well, we need them, we love them. The Mexican people have been one of the finest groups of people outside of a few outside antagonists that come in and have tried to disrupt, and have tried to clutter the minds of these people...I'll tell you one thing about these people that work there. They don't want to belong to anything. They just don't want to...sure...maybe some of them are not citizens. (This question came up in regard to Mr. Campos, a non-citizen here since 1910. Mr. De Rivera said that Mr. Campos, like many others, had had no schooling because of having to work from an early age.-Ed.), but they want to be left alone, they're honest, they like to work. And when they're agitated, why sure, they think they're mistreated, but they're treated better in Ventura County than any place in the world...We're proud of Ventura County and would like you to visit us at any time. Anywhere."

Surrebuttal by Labor

Commenting on Mr. Pinkerton's testimony, Mr. Eddie Perez, Packing House Workers' representative, told of meetings with Secretary Mitchell, the United States Department of Labor and the State Department of Employment, and said:

"I don't think they would waste their time coming down here if there wasn't any problem. I don't think that there would have been the shake-up that there was in the State Employment Agency (sic) if there wasn't any problems at all, especially in Ventura County like we proved through the testimony of the workers."

Perez repeated the charge that there had been "...harassment and discouragement on the part of the (Growers' Farm Labor) Association to get rid of locals so they can keep the Nationals working, due to the low wages that they pay..."

During the discussion with Mr. Perez, whose testimony on the necessity of a minimum wage was not allowed as not being germane to any matter the committee was studying, the point was again made that

many growers would like to raise wages but are unable to do it because a local worker cannot be paid more than a Mexican National.

#### VISIT TO A LABOR CAMP

At the invitation of Mr. Van Horne, the committee, after the close of the meeting, spent the late afternoon and early evening looking over the Johnson Fruit Company's (Sunkist subsidiary) packing plant (staffed entirely by local labor, mostly Mexican-Americans), and their bracero field worker "camp", which is actually within Santa Barbara.

The camp consists of several buildings of sound barrack construction used as sleeping quarters, another which is the "day room" with a clinic attached, another which has the chapel as an ell to the kitchen and dining hall, and another which has showers and toilets.

The buildings are in a yard which was paved, according to the Company manager, by order of the Labor Department some years ago, to keep down dust.

All the buildings were kept neat and clean. The barracks had neither been ceiled nor painted inside and as a result were rather dark and cheerless, but they would be described as far better than average farm labor housing in an era when the FSA's model camps no longer exist.

The clinic was adequate for emergency care and medicines were kept locked between doctor's visits. The bathhouse and toilet building was clean and modern.

The dayroom was large, but not well-provided with recreational facilities (it should be emphasized, however, that the "camp" is in town and the workers are free to come and go as they will).

The dining hall and the kitchen were spotless and the most modern cooking and baking facilities were at hand. Supper was being served, and the Committee sampled it, while the investigator ate a full-helping. It consisted of a thin, but tasty stew rather tough beef seasoned with peppers, etc., excellent tortillas, and fine beans and cheese. The cooks, bakers, and serving men were cleanly uniformed and the uniforms were obviously fresh each day. There was ample storage space and meat, vegetables, and fruit were stored in the manner good stewardship requires.

The chapel was part of the former company office. It is a simple but attractive village chapel, with no pews but a shiningly waxed floor, altar, and other necessary religious furniture and pictures. (Here again, many of the workers, no doubt, go to local churches).

The trucks to take the workers to the fields had been or were being altered to meet the latest safety requirements.

The camp superintendent questioned the braceros in Spanish and was answered easily and friendly. The questions were not loaded, and the answers were germane and often amusing: "I would have had enough money to buy some land down there, but fell in love with some fire-water up here last time."

# # # #